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A Critical Review on *Madhumeha* (Diabetes Mellitus) with its Preventive Approach

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ABSTRACT

Prameha is disease of *Mutravaha Srotasa* having *Kapha* dominancy which can be correlated with diabetes mellitus. The term diabetes mellitus describes a metabolic disorder of multiple etiologies characterized by chronic hyperglycemia with disturbances of carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism resulting from defects in insulin secretion, insulin action, or both. *Madhumeha* is considered as a subtype under the *Vatika* type of *Prameha* and it is characterized by passage of urine with sweet taste like honey along with sweetness of whole body. With appropriate use of Ayurvedic preventive measures such as *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Aharvidhi* and therapeutic measures *Madhumeha* (DM) can be prevented.

Key words: *Prameha*, *Mutravaha Srotas*, *Vatika*, *Madhumeha*, *Dinacharya*.

INTRODUCTION

Madhumeha (Diabetes mellitus) is attracting global importance, as it is rocking the world as a non-infectious epidemic / pandemic. *Prameha* has been mentioned as a *Kulaja* (familial) *Vikara* (disorder). All the description related to *Prameha* available in *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* is collected and reviewed. *Prameha* has been described eloquently and elaborately in *Charaka Samhita*.^[1] In *Sushruta Samhita* it is found in *Nidana Sthana* sixth chapter and in *Cikitsa Sthana* 11th, 12th and 13th chapter.^[2] While *Madhavakara* describes it in its 33rd chapter, which is *Prameha Nidana* i.e. it has tendency of inheritance. The term diabetes mellitus describes a

metabolic disorder of multiple etiologies characterized by chronic hyperglycemia with disturbances of carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism resulting from defects in insulin secretion, insulin action, or both.

Ancient Ayurvedic scholars have grouped *Madhumeha* (Diabetes mellitus) under one among the 20 *Prameha* (urinary disorders); particularly one of the kind of *Vatic* disorder. Also, any of the *Prameha* (urinary disorder) if neglected ultimately it ends up in *Madhumeha* due to nature.

A vivid description of *Prameha* (a disease characterized by passing of excess, frequent and dirty urine) is available in Ayurvedic classics where - in *Madhumeha* is considered as a subtype under the *Vatika* type of *Prameha* and it is characterized by passage of urine with sweet taste like honey along with sweetness of whole body.

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Causes for diabetes Ayurveda^[3]

- *Asyasukham* - Comfortable seating (luxury, sedentary lifestyle, lack of physical activities and exercise).
- *Svapnasukham* - comforts of sleeping, excess sleeping.

- *Kaphakrut Cha Sarvam* - All foods and lifestyle activities which increase *Kapha Sahaja* (inherited factor)
- *Chinta* (stress)
- *Shoka* (grief)
- *Bhaya* (fear)
- *Deergharoga* (long standing illness)
- *Alasya* (sedentary life)

Etiological factors

In *Ayurveda*, excessive intake of heavy, unctuous and saline taste foods, new cereals and fresh wine consumption in large quantity, sedentary life style, not indulging in any sort of physical and mental exercise and not undergoing for bio-purification of body are said to be etiological factors for *Madhumeha*.^[4]

Prevention of Madhumeha through Ayurveda:^{[5],[6]}

a. Primordial prevention of Diabetes Mellitus

Primordial prevention is the avoidance of the emergence or development of risk factors in countries or population groups in which they have not yet appeared. This is the true primitive prevention in lifestyle diseases like DM and it is achieved through individual and mass education of regular exercise (*Vyayama*) till the appearance of features of *Balardha Vyayama* (exercise up to half strength) as a part of *Dinacharya* (daily regime). Initial treatment of patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus includes education, with emphasis on lifestyle changes including diet, exercise and weight reduction.

Use of proper dietary habits as per *Ashtavidha Ahara Visheshayatan* and *Dwadasha Ashana Vichara* (eight and twelve rules for taking diet) very beginning of life i.e. childhood is again a strong measure in preventing risk factors of DM from emerging in adulthood because *Ayurveda* advocates sedentary lifestyle (*Asyasukham*) and high calorie diet (*Guda Vaikritam*) as important causative factors for *Madhumeha*.

b. Primary prevention of Diabetes Mellitus

Primary prevention is action taken prior to the onset of disease which removes possibility that a disease

will ever occur. High risk people are identified and they are advised for life style modifications in socio-economic, behavioral and lifestyle changes. These include modifying lifestyle as per *Ayurvedic* classical texts such as *Sadvritta* (good lifestyle practices), non suppression of natural urges, *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoiding causative factors) etc.

According to *Sushruta Samhita*, the food enriched with alcohol, excessive milk, oil, ghee, flour and meat of the animals which live in water or near water should be avoided because they can precipitate the disease *Prameha*.

Management of Prameha (secondary prevention)^{[6],[7]}

A. *Chikitsasutra* (principles of treatment)

B. *Chikitsa* (management)

Chikitsasutra (Principles of treatment)

In all types of *Pramehas*, *Kapha* gets vitiated, but in *Madhumeha* comparatively *Vata* is often aggravated as well. Therefore therapies will be directed at both *Kapha* and *Vata* simultaneously. According to *Acharya Charaka*, those patients who are obese and well-built, one should adopt *Samsodhana Chikitsa* and who thin and weak, one should undergo for *Bruhana* therapy. According to *Sushruta*, *Krusha Pramehi* should be treated with *Santarpana Chikitsa* processed diet and drink, while obese should be treated with *Apatarpana* measures (*Vyayama* and *Shodhana*).

Chikitsa (management):^{[8],[9],[10]}

It consists of *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (exercise and Yoga) and *Ausadhi* (medicines)

Ausadhi (medicines)

As it is evident that *Kapha Dosha* is predominant in *Prameha* and the *Dushya Meda* is of same nature. In *Ayurveda* for the treatment of *Prameha*, drugs having *Tikta* (bitter), *Katu* (pungent) and *Kashaya* (astringent) *Rasa* have been recommended. *Sushruta* clearly indicated the decoction of *Salasaradi Gana* drugs with *Shilajatu* for the treatment of *Prameha* / *Madhumeha*.

Ahara Chikitsa (Diet Therapy)

First of all "*Nidana Parivarjana*" is very firmly advocated in all classics for the management of disease. So, *Ahara* which does not increase body weight and opposite to etiological factors of *Prameha* is advised to the patient. It is well known that diabetes is a disease of modified life style and faulty *Agni*, so more emphasis should be given on diet and bio- purificatory measures.

Charaka has recommended *Yava* etc. as a principle diet for *Pramehi*. In this concern he suggested that *Yava* first given to animals and then remaining parts collected from the dung of that animals to be consumed by *Pramehi*.

Vihara (Exercise)

As mentioned earlier, lack of exercise and excessive sleep during day and night time play an important role in etiology and pathogenesis of *Prameha*. *Sushruta* has described that in advance stage of *Prameha*, *Pramehi* should practice of regular physical exercise, wrestling, actual sports, riding on a horse, or an elephant, long walks, pedestrian journeys, practicing archery, casting of javelins etc.

CONCLUSION

Prameha is disease of *Mutravaha Srotasa* having *Kapha* dominancy which can be correlated with diabetes mellitus. The reduction of sugar level is slow and progressive with continuous use of Ayurvedic drugs. They are safe because these drugs will not lead to hypoglycemic episodes. Type 2 diabetes mellitus is increasingly common, primarily because of increases in the prevalence of a sedentary lifestyle and obesity. With appropriate use of Ayurvedic preventive measures such as *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Aharavidhi* and therapeutic measures *Madhumeha* (DM) can be prevented. Appropriate approach of diet, exercise and medicine it can be well managed by Ayurveda.

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